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*While most Argentines are of Spanish and Italian descent, embassies in Buenos Aires representing countries that recently joined the European Union - e.g. Estonia, Lithuania and Poland - are reporting a big increase in passport applications. Daniel Schweimler reports:*

The truth is, said Sebastian, an Argentine, it does feel strange being Estonian. He doesn't speak the language, has never been to Tallinn and knows little about the Baltic state's history or **customs**. But thanks to an Estonian grandfather who **emigrated** to Argentina in the first half of the twentieth century, he now has an Estonian passport, which **gives him access to** the European Union.

Sebastian is one of a growing number of Argentines **discovering** their East European **roots**. The Polish, Slovak, Slovenian, Estonian and Lithuanian embassies in Buenos Aires all report a growing number of enquiries and applications for passports. The Romanians, who demand that applicants speak the language, say many ask where they can learn it.

Many Argentine youngsters are simply looking for a quick and easy entrance to the European Union - some to travel, others to work. But Argentina also suffers **periodic** economic and political crises, and many like to have a second passport in case the need **to escape** should arise.

During the **economic collapse** of 2001, the queues outside the Italian and Spanish consulates in Buenos Aires **stretched for several blocks**. But now the Lithuanian authorities say that surnames such as Rodriguez and Sanchez are **becoming increasingly common** on the streets of Vilnius.

Daniel Schweimler, BBC News, Buenos Aires

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>customs</b>	traditions and habits
<b>emigrated</b>	left his native country to go and live elsewhere
<b>gives him access to</b>	allows him to come and live in
<b>discovering</b>	here, turning to, using
<b>roots</b>	origins, where your family comes from
<b>periodic</b>	happening again at certain intervals
<b>to escape</b>	here, to leave their country behind - because of economic and/or political difficulties there - and go to live elsewhere
<b>economic collapse</b>	a very severe economic crisis
<b>stretched for several blocks</b>	became longer than usual going as far as several blocks away
<b>becoming increasingly common</b>	heard more and more often

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7503877.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/09/080917\\_argentina\\_eu\\_passports.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/09/080917_argentina_eu_passports.shtml)